

of the biennial report to Congress, the Secretary of Commerce, acting through or in cooperation with the Secretary of State, will initiate consultations with nations that have been identified in the biennial report for the purpose of encouraging such nations to take appropriate corrective action with respect to the IUU fishing activities described in the biennial report.

(d) *Procedures to certify nations identified as having fishing vessels engaged in IUU fishing.* Each nation that is identified as having fishing vessels engaged in IUU fishing shall receive either a positive or a negative certification from the Secretary of Commerce, and this certification will be published in the biennial report to Congress. A positive certification indicates that a nation has taken appropriate corrective action to address the IUU fishing activity described in the biennial report. A negative certification indicates that a nation has not taken appropriate corrective action.

(1) The Secretary of Commerce shall issue a positive certification to an identified nation upon making a determination that such nation has taken appropriate corrective action to address the activities for which such nation has been identified in the biennial report to Congress. When making such determination, the Secretary shall take into account the following:

(i) Whether the government of the nation identified pursuant to paragraph (a) of this section has provided evidence documenting that it has taken corrective action to address the IUU fishing activity described in the biennial report; or

(ii) Whether the relevant international fishery management organization has adopted and, if applicable, the identified member nation has implemented and is enforcing, measures to effectively address the IUU fishing activity of the identified nation's fishing vessels described in the biennial report.

(2) Prior to a formal certification determination, nations will be provided with preliminary certification determinations and an opportunity to support and/or refute the preliminary determinations and communicate any corrective actions taken to address the activities for which such nations were

identified. The Secretary of Commerce shall consider any information received during the course of these consultations when making the subsequent certification determinations.

§ 300.203 Identification and certification of nations engaged in bycatch of protected living marine resources.

(a) *Procedures to identify nations whose fishing vessels are engaged in PLMR bycatch.* (1) NMFS will identify and list, in the biennial report to Congress, nations whose fishing vessels are engaged, or have been engaged during the preceding calendar year prior to publication of the biennial report to Congress, in fishing activities or practices either in waters beyond any national jurisdiction that result in bycatch of a PLMR, or in waters beyond the U.S. EEZ that result in bycatch of a PLMR that is shared by the United States. When determining whether to identify nations as having fishing vessels engaged in PLMR bycatch, NMFS will take into account all relevant matters including, but not limited to, the history, nature, circumstances, extent, duration, and gravity of the bycatch activity in question.

(2) NMFS will also examine whether there is an international organization with jurisdiction over the conservation and protection of the relevant PLMRs or a relevant international or regional fishery organization. If such organization exists, NMFS will examine whether the organization has adopted measures to effectively end or reduce bycatch of such species; and if the nation whose fishing vessels are engaged, or have been engaged during the preceding calendar year prior to publication of the biennial report to Congress, in bycatch of PLMRs is a party to or maintains cooperating status with the relevant international organization.

(3) NMFS will also examine whether the nation has implemented measures designed to end or reduce such bycatch that are comparable in effectiveness to U.S. regulatory requirements. In considering whether a nation has implemented measures that are comparable in effectiveness to those of the United States, NMFS will evaluate if different conditions exist that could bear on the

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feasibility and efficiency of such measures to end or reduce bycatch of the pertinent PLMRs.

(b) *Notification of nations identified as having fishing vessels engaged in PLMR bycatch.* Upon identifying a nation whose vessels have been engaged in bycatch of PLMRs in the biennial report to Congress, the Secretary of Commerce will notify the President of such identification. Within 60 days after submission of the biennial report to Congress, the Secretary of Commerce, acting through or in consultation with the Secretary of State, will notify identified nations about the requirements under the Moratorium Protection Act and this subpart.

(c) *Consultations and negotiations.* Upon submission of the biennial report to Congress, the Secretary of Commerce, acting through or in consultation with the Secretary of State, will:

(1) Initiate consultations within 60 days after submission of the biennial report to Congress with the governments of identified nations for the purposes of entering into bilateral and multilateral treaties with such nations to protect the PLMRs from bycatch activities described in the biennial report; and

(2) Seek agreements through the appropriate international organizations calling for international restrictions on the fishing activities or practices described in the biennial report that result in bycatch of PLMRs and, as necessary, request the Secretary of State to initiate the amendment of any existing international treaty to which the United States is a party for the protection and conservation of the PLMRs in question to make such agreements consistent with this subpart.

(d) *International cooperation and assistance.* To the greatest extent possible, consistent with existing authority and the availability of funds, the Secretary shall:

(1) Provide appropriate assistance to nations identified by the Secretary under paragraph (a) of this section and international organizations of which those nations are members to assist those nations in qualifying for a positive certification under paragraph(e) of this section;

(2) Undertake, where appropriate, cooperative research activities on species assessments and improved bycatch mitigation techniques, with those nations or organizations;

(3) Encourage and facilitate the transfer of appropriate technology to those nations or organizations to assist those nations in qualifying for positive certification under paragraph (e) of this section; and

(4) Provide assistance to those nations or organizations in designing and implementing appropriate fish harvesting plans.

(e) *Procedures to certify nations identified as having fishing vessels engaged in PLMR bycatch.* (1) Each nation that is identified as having fishing vessels engaged in PLMR bycatch shall receive either a positive or a negative certification from the Secretary of Commerce, and this certification will be published in the biennial report to Congress. The Secretary of Commerce shall issue a positive certification to an identified nation upon making a determination that:

(i) Such nation has provided evidence documenting its adoption of a regulatory program to end or reduce bycatch of such PLMRs that is comparable in effectiveness to regulatory measures required under U.S. law to address bycatch in the relevant fisheries, taking into account different conditions that could bear on the feasibility and efficacy of these measures, and which, in the case of an identified nation with fishing vessels engaged in pelagic longline fishing, includes the mandatory use of circle hooks, careful handling and release equipment, training and observer programs; and

(ii) Such nation has established a management plan that will assist in the collection of species-specific data on PLMR bycatch to support international stock assessments and conservation efforts for PLMRs.

(2) Nations will be notified prior to a formal certification determination and will be provided with an opportunity to support and/or refute preliminary certification determinations, and communicate any corrective actions taken to address the activities for which such nations were identified. The Secretary

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of Commerce shall consider any information received during the course of these consultations when making the subsequent certification determinations.

§ 300.204 Effect of certification.

(a) If an identified nation does not receive a positive certification under this subpart (*i.e.*, the nation receives a negative certification or no certification is made), the fishing vessels of such nation are, to the extent consistent with international law, subject to the denial of entry into any place in the United States and to the navigable waters of the United States.

(b) At the recommendation of the Secretary of Commerce (*see* § 300.205), certain fish or fish products from such nation may be subject to import prohibitions.

(c) Any action recommended under this paragraph (c) shall be consistent with international obligations, including the WTO Agreement.

(d) If certain fish or fish products are prohibited from entering the United States, within six months after the imposition of the prohibition, the Secretary of Commerce shall determine whether the prohibition is insufficient to cause that nation to effectively address the IUU fishing described in the biennial report, or that nation has retaliated against the United States as a result of that prohibition. The Secretary of Commerce shall certify to the President each affirmative determination that an import prohibition is insufficient to cause a nation to effectively address such IUU fishing activity or that a nation has taken retaliatory action against the United States. This certification is deemed to be a certification under section 1978(a) of Title 22, which provides that the President may direct the Secretary of the Treasury to prohibit the bringing or the importation into the United States of any products from the offending country for any duration as the President determines appropriate and to the extent that such prohibition is sanctioned by the World Trade Organization.

(e) *Duration of certification.* Any nation identified in the biennial report to Congress and negatively certified will

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remain negatively certified until the Secretary of Commerce determines that the nation has taken appropriate corrective action to address the IUU fishing activity and/or bycatch of PLMRs for which it was identified in the biennial report. Receipt of a positive certification determination will demonstrate that appropriate corrective action has been taken by a nation to address the relevant IUU fishing activity and/or bycatch of PLMRs.

(f) *Consultations.* NMFS will, working through or in consultation with the Department of State, continue consultations with nations that receive a negative certification with respect to the IUU fishing activities or bycatch of PLMRs described in the biennial report to Congress. The Secretary of Commerce shall take the results of such consultations into consideration when making a subsequent certification determination for such nation.

§ 300.205 Denial of port privileges and import restrictions on fish or fish products.

(a) *Scope of Applicability.* (1) If a nation identified in the biennial report under § 300.202(a) or § 300.203(a) is not positively certified by the Secretary of Commerce, and fishing vessels of the nation are allowed entry to any place in the United States and to the navigable waters of the United States under this subpart, those vessels will be subject to inspection and may be prohibited from landing, processing, or transshipping fish and fish products. Services, including the refueling and re-supplying of such fishing vessels, may be prohibited, with the exception of services essential to the safety, health, and welfare of the crew. Fishing vessels will not be denied port access or services in cases of force majeure or distress.

(2) For nations identified in the biennial report under § 300.202(a) that are not positively certified, the Secretary of Commerce shall recommend import prohibitions with respect to fish or fish products from those nations. Such recommendations on import prohibitions would not apply to fish or fish products not managed under an applicable international fishery agreement, or if there is no applicable international fishery